

Twelfth Sunday after Pentecost
Sunday August 16, 2026, 10:00 a.m.

Voluntary

“Prelude”

Charles Callahan

Hymn 470

“There’s a wideness in God’s mercy”

Beecher

Welcome

The Opening Acclamation *(page 14 in the booklet)*

Collect

Almighty God, you have given your only Son to be for us a sacrifice for sin, and also an example of godly life: Give us grace to receive thankfully the fruits of his redeeming work, and to follow daily in the blessed steps of his most holy life; through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. **Amen.**

First Lesson Genesis 45:1-15

Joseph could no longer control himself before all those who stood by him, and he cried out, “Send everyone away from me.” So no one stayed with him when Joseph made himself known to his brothers. And he wept so loudly that the Egyptians heard it, and the household of Pharaoh heard it. Joseph said to his brothers, “I am Joseph. Is my father still alive?” But his brothers could not answer him, so dismayed were they at his presence.

Then Joseph said to his brothers, “Come closer to me.” And they came closer. He said, “I am your brother, Joseph, whom you sold into Egypt. And now do not be distressed, or angry with yourselves, because you sold me here; for God sent me before you to preserve life. For the famine has been in the land these two years; and there are five more years in which there will be neither plowing nor harvest. God sent me before you to preserve for you a remnant on earth, and to keep alive for you many survivors. So it was not you who sent me here, but God; he has made me a father to Pharaoh, and lord of all his house and ruler over all the land of Egypt. Hurry and go up to my father and say to him, ‘Thus says your son Joseph, God has made me lord of all Egypt; come down to me, do not delay. You shall settle in the land of Goshen, and you shall be near me, you and your children and your children’s children, as well as your flocks, your herds, and all that you have. I will provide for you there—since there are five more years of famine to come—so that you and your household, and all that you have, will not come to poverty.’ And now your eyes and the

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eyes of my brother Benjamin see that it is my own mouth that speaks to you. You must tell my father how greatly I am honored in Egypt, and all that you have seen. Hurry and bring my father down here.” Then he fell upon his brother Benjamin’s neck and wept, while Benjamin wept upon his neck. And he kissed all his brothers and wept upon them; and after that his brothers talked with him.

Hear what the Spirit is saying to God’s People
Thanks be to God

Psalm 133 *(Please read responsively)*

Ecce, quam bonum!

- 1 Oh, how good and pleasant it is, *
when brethren live together in unity!
2 It is like fine oil upon the head *
that runs down upon the beard,
3 Upon the beard of Aaron, *
and runs down upon the collar of his robe.
4 It is like the dew of Hermon *
that falls upon the hills of Zion.
5 For there the LORD has ordained the blessing: *
life for evermore.

Second Lesson Romans 11:1-2a, 29-32

I ask, then, has God rejected his people? By no means! I myself am an Israelite, a descendant of Abraham, a member of the tribe of Benjamin. God has not rejected his people whom he foreknew.

For the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable. Just as you were once disobedient to God but have now received mercy because of their disobedience, so they have now been disobedient in order that, by the mercy shown to you, they too may now receive mercy. For God has imprisoned all in disobedience so that he may be merciful to all.

Hear what the Spirit is saying to the Churches
Thanks be to God

The Gospel Matthew 15: 10-20 , 21-28

The Holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Matthew
Glory to you, Lord Christ

Jesus called the crowd to him and said to them, “Listen and understand: it is not what goes into the mouth that defiles a person, but it is what comes out of the mouth that defiles.” Then the disciples approached and said to him, “Do you know that the Pharisees took offense when they heard what you said?” He answered, “Every plant that my heavenly Father has not

planted will be uprooted. Let them alone; they are blind guides of the blind. And if one blind person guides another, both will fall into a pit.” But Peter said to him, “Explain this parable to us.” Then he said, “Are you also still without understanding? Do you not see that whatever goes into the mouth enters the stomach, and goes out into the sewer? But what comes out of the mouth proceeds from the heart, and this is what defiles. For out of the heart come evil intentions, murder, adultery, fornication, theft, false witness, slander. These are what defile a person, but to eat with unwashed hands does not defile.”

Jesus left that place and went away to the district of Tyre and Sidon. Just then a Canaanite woman from that region came out and started shouting, “Have mercy on me, Lord, Son of David; my daughter is tormented by a demon.” But he did not answer her at all. And his disciples came and urged him, saying, “Send her away, for she keeps shouting after us.” He answered, “I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.” But she came and knelt before him, saying, “Lord, help me.” He answered, “It is not fair to take the children’s food and throw it to the dogs.” She said, “Yes, Lord, yet even the dogs eat the crumbs that fall from their masters’ table.” Then Jesus answered her, “Woman, great is your faith! Let it be done for you as you wish.” And her daughter was healed instantly.

The Gospel of the Lord
Praise to you, Lord Christ

Sermon

Canon Heather J. Blais

Affirmation of Faith *(page 15/16 in the booklet)*

The Prayers of the People *(page 16 in the booklet)*

We also pray for: Ken, Keith, Marcus, Drew, Robertine, Paul, Glen, Ted, Charley, Craig; Natasha; Sue; Mike; Don; Pat; Heather; Caleb; Angelo; Linda; Sharon: the family of William Travis; the family of Kimberly Ekstrom; a just peace for Ukraine; those affected by the violence in the Middle East and Sudan.

Those who have died: William Travis, Kimberly Ekstrom

Confession *(page 18 in the booklet)*

Peace *(page 18 in the booklet)*
(Collection Plates are located at each Entrance)

Offertory Solo “In the garden” Austin Miles/Kenneth Baird

The Great Thanksgiving *(page 19 in booklet)*

Sanctus *(Sung by all)*

Fraction Anthem I *(Sung by all)*

Communion Solo “O God, beyond all praising” Gustav Holst/
Robert Powell

Post Communion Prayer *(page 24/25 in the booklet)*

Blessing

Announcements

Hymn 544 “Jesus shall reign where’er the sun” *Duke Street*

Postlude: “Give thanks” Henry Smith/Joel Raney

PARISH NOTICES

WHO ARE WE? St. Stephen’s Parish is a community of people who together seek to serve our community, drawing strength and joy from worshipping together. We don’t all believe the same, act the same, vote the same, or dress the same – but we strive to love the same, as Christ loved and served all people.

ST. STEPHEN’S TABLE - Gifts may be made by sending a donation to the church or through our website. On the website, select “Give,” to find the link to the online giving page. Select “St. Stephen’s Table” from the Fund menu. *This week’s Gifts to the Table are given in loving memory of her daughter Carolyn Bregg by Dorothy Lambert.*

THIS MORNING we welcome Canon Heather J Blais who serves as our diocese's Canon to the Ordinary, after over 13 years serving as the Rector of Saints James and Andrew in Greenfield, MA. She lives with her family in the Connecticut River Valley and is known for her collection of liturgical Birkenstocks.

FOR THE NEXT TWO WEEKS, The Rev David DeSmith will return to lead the 10:00 a.m. service.

SUMMER READING – *Big Queer Nun* by Shane Phelan. Friends of the author, David DeSmith and Jim Alden, will host a Zoom conversation with Shane on September 24 at 7 p.m. Purchase books at Indie Readery and Records, 314 North St., Pittsfield.

PARISH ADMINISTRATOR SEARCH - The hiring team completed a first round of interviews this past week. We expect to bring one or two finalists forward to meet with Nina by video, an arrangement she and the Wardens agreed to before her sabbatical began. Our aim is to have our new Parish Administrator in place with enough overlap for Sarah to hand off the work properly before she departs. Watch for news about Sarah's send-off. Josie Ellis, Leah Luczynski, Craig Reynolds



GIVING TO ST. STEPHEN'S IS EASY – Scan the QR code to find our giving form or text “giviststephens\$youramount” to 73256 (example:giviststephens\$25 will donate \$25.) Google Pay accepted. Message and data rates apply. Message frequency varies. Text HELP to 73256 for help. Text STOP to 73256 to cancel.

Paper Toter – Roy Sutton	Cardboard-Home- Jeff Pringle
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THIS WEEK'S SCHEDULE

Office Hours: Tuesday – Thursday, 9 a.m.– 4 p.m.
Worship: Compline: Wed. August 19 6:30 p.m. Zoom,
Saturday, August 22, 5 p.m., Sunday August 23, 10 a.m.
St. Stephen's Table: Thursday & Friday, Grab and Go, 4:30 p.m.
Meetings: AA: Friday at 6:30 p.m.; Saturday at 10:00 a.m., NA: Saturday, 6:30 DR

MINISTERS OF THE CELEBRATION

CELEBRANT	10 a.m.	Canon Heather J. Blais
LECTORS	10 a.m.	Daniel Moon, Wendy Coakley
LAY MINISTERS	10 a.m.	Joan Evans, Susan LeBourdais
ALTAR GUILD		Joan Evans, Sandra Soule
GREETERS		Craig Reynolds, Jennifer Townsend
VESTRY GREETER		David Nevin
CRUCIFER		Christine Furcinte-Reynolds
FLUTE		Amanda Watroba

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THIS WEEK'S PRAYER LIST

In our Parish prayers, we pray for: Ken, Keith, Marcus, Drew, Robertine, Paul, Glen, Ted, Charley, Craig; Bill; Natasha; Sue; Mike; Don; Pat; Heather; Mary; Caleb; Angelo; Linda; Sharon; The families of William Travis and Kimberly Ekstrom; a just peace for Ukraine; those affected by the violence in the Middle East and Sudan.

We pray for those serving in the armed forces and their families:

MAJ Andrew B., CPT Nichols P., 1LT Curran J.D., Lance CPL Chad L., SPC Amanda D., Pvt. Corey F.D., Army Ranger Sean J., Micah H.

We pray for our community

The Elizabeth Freeman Center
Pittsfield Area Council of Congregations
Members of Congress

In Our Diocesan cycle of prayer we pray for:

Holy Trinity, Southbridge
Bishop's Chaplains to Retired Clergy
Western Mass Food Bank

In our Anglican cycle of prayer we pray for:

Sunday: The Church in Wales
Monday: Diocese of Badagry (Nigeria)
Tuesday: Diocese of Bahamas and The Turks and Caicos Islands (West Indies)
Wednesday: Diocese of Ballarat (Australia)
Thursday: Diocese of Bangor (Wales)
Friday: Diocese of Banks and Torres (Melanesia)
Saturday: Diocese of Barbados (West Indies)

St. Stephen's Episcopal Church

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VESTRY

John Garinther, Co-Warden
J. Christopher Perry, Treasurer
James Brennan
Caleb Dillon-Harmon
Leah Luczynski
Anne Williams

David Nevin, Co-Warden
Christopher Plankey, Clerk
Al Symonds, Asst. Treasurer
Christine Furcinite-Reynolds
William Morey

Our Staff

The Rev. Dr. Nina R. Pooley, Rector
ninapooley@revnina.org

Sarah Morrison, Parish Administrator
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Bert Boos, Office Assistant
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Joy Mullen, Director of Music
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Dan Moon,
Director of St Stephen's Table
dmoon@pittsfield.net

Weekday Sextons – Ecuadorian Women's Co-op
Sunday Sexton Roy Stillman

The Diocese of Western Massachusetts

The Rt. Rev. Miguelina Howell

800-322-8513 www.diocesewma.org

Welcome to Worship at St. Stephen's

We are delighted to have you with us today as we worship together. St. Stephen's Episcopal Church is an inclusive parish welcoming all people - regardless of ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, or creed. God loves you, and so do we!

All Are Welcome to Receive from God's Table.

Each week we share the bread and the wine: the gifts of God, given for the people of God. We invite you to receive communion, but, if you'd rather receive a blessing, please come forward and indicate that by crossing your arms across your chest.

Receiving Communion:

The bread - When you come forward hold your hands out together, palm up. The clergy person will place a wafer in your hands, and say, "The body of Christ." Your response: "Amen." (Please let the clergy know if you'd prefer a gluten free wafer.)

The wine - is offered by chalice bearers on either side of the aisle in front of the altar area. Those sitting on the right should choose the right side chalice, those sitting on the left, choose the left side chalice. The chalice bearer will offer the wine, saying, "The Blood of Christ." Your response: "Amen." You may receive the wine by taking a small sip from the chalice, or by dipping your wafer in the wine, taking care not to touch the wine with your fingers. You may also choose to hear the words and respond without choosing to partake of the wine.

Children are always welcome at worship!!

Families are welcome to sit wherever they wish. There are child-friendly books in a bookshelf near a coloring station in the back, on the right side of the sanctuary. There's a second coloring station on the front left, where there is also our **Kids' Own Space activity area**. There's a Nursery Nook in the Guild Room for caregivers of infants and toddlers who need to take a break during worship. Caregivers, please come and go as your child needs to - for their safety, **we ask that children be accompanied at all times**. Sunday school is offered on the 2nd and 4th Sundays of each month, September through May.

Collection Plates are located at each entrance. All gifts gratefully accepted.

Restrooms are located in our Parish House: Exit the sanctuary via the doors on either side of the altar, follow the signs.